Air India during the last two years and the current financial year are as under:—

Year	Loss (Rs. in crores)
1996-97	296.94
1997-98	181.01
1998-99 Prov. (April—Sept. 98)	129.08 Estimated

The losses are due to increase in expenditure on account of interest and depreciation on new aircraft, reduction in yield due to increased competition and cost of operations, increase in wage bill and other staff costs and landing, handling and navigational charges, depreciation of rupee value, etc.

Air India Limited has taken the following steps to improve the performance:—

(i) Marketing efforts have been stepped up to generate additional revenue.

(ii) Network rationalization and consolidation with emphasis placed on route profitability.

(iii) Reduction in expenditure on outside repairs of aircraft by under taking more in-house repairs.

(iv) Several posts of India based officers abroad have been abolished.

The Government has also constituted a Committee of experts under the Chairmanship of Dr. Vijay Kelkar, at present Finance Secretary, Government of India to undertake a comprehensive examination of the reasons for the losses incurrred by the Air India and to suggest strategies for turning around the company.

Air India have sought infusion of capital by the Government. The Disinvestment Commission in its VIII Report on Air India has, inter-alia, recommended infusion of Government equity of Rs. 1000 crores and induction of strategic partner on the basis of global bids. The recommendations of the Commission are under consideration of the Government.

Installation of Raytheon Radar System at Delhi and Mumbai

935. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Raytheon SAR RADAR System does not fulfil the requirements of the ATC as alleged by the ATC Union;

(b) whether it is also a fact that only a part of the equipment has been installed and not the entire system; and

(c) if so, what is the latest position on the system at Mumbai and Delhi?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) The entire Airport Surveillance Radar System (ASR) has been installed by M/s Raytheon at Delhi and Mumbai airports as per specifications. It meets all the requirements of Air Traffic Control as confirmed during the factory test site test and flight checks after installation.

(b) The entire system has been installed at both sites at Delhi and Mumbai.

(c) The equipment functions as per specifications both at Delhi and Mumbai.

Voluntary Retirement Scheme in Air India

936. SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:
SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Air India has evolved a voluntary retirement scheme (VRS) in order to reduce its staff strength and financial loss; and

(b) if so, the estimated number of surplus staff and how many of them are expected to accept the VRS and the expected total cost thereon?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) and (b) Air India has not yet taken a final decision to introduce the Voluntary Retirement Scheme.